DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 205 613 TM 810 525

AUTHOR Silber, Theodore J.
TITLE Philadelphia Training Project for Special Education Supervisors and Principals, 1979-1980. Report No. 8144.
INSTITUTION Philadelphia School District, Pa. Office of Research and Evaluation.
SPONS AGENCY Department of Education, Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE Feb 81
GRANT G007801512
NOTE 16p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Administrators: Elementary Secondary Education: Pretests Posttests: *Program Effectiveness: Questionnaires: Self Evaluation (Individuals): *Special Education: *Staff Development: *Workshops
IDENTIFIERS Education for All Handicapped Children Act: *Philadelphia School District PA: Public Law 94 142: Special Education Program Checklist

ABSTRACT

This three year project was designed to provide staff development to principals, vice principals and other school administration special education issues relating to the implementation of Public Law 94-142. In 1979, sixty-three administrators participated in a week long summer workshop, during which project staff and speakers from within the Division of Special Education presented topics such as: discussions on Public Law 94-142: due process in Special Education: Child Study Evaluation Team (CSET) procedures: models for staff development: availability of resources inside and outside the school district: and the use of the Special Education Program Checklist, an instrument to assist principals in observing and assessing special education classrooms in their schools. Pretests-posttest self-rating evaluations were conducted of the participants' perceptions of their knowledge acquisition about thirteen selected special education topics. Results showed mean post ratings increased on all thirteen items: these are illustrated in tabular form. Participants' skill in the use of the observation checklist could not be measured due to insufficient data. Appendix A contains the questionnaire distribued to obtain participants' reactions to the usefulness of the workshop. A major accomplishment of the project was the refinement and field testing of the Checklist. (Author/AEF)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED205613

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

PHILADELPHIA TRAINING PROJECT FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION SUPERVISORS AND PRINCIPALS 1979 - 1980

Report Prepared By

Theodore J. Silber
Research Assistant

Irvin J. Farber, Director
Priority Operations Evaluation Services

Bernard Solomon
Executive Director

Office of Research and Evaluation
THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA

February 1981
Report #8144

TM 810 525

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

H. M. Kean

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mr. Arthur W. Thomas, President
Mrs. Edward Oberholtzer, Vice President
Mr. Augustus Baxter
Mrs. Lawrence Boonin
Mr. Joseph H. Previty
Mr. Samuel H. Rubin
Mrs. Michael Stack
George Philip Stahl, Jr., Esq.
Dr. Nicholas E. Trolio

* *

Dr. Michael P. Marcase
Superintendent of Schools

Mr. Charles A. Highsmith
Deputy Superintendent

* *

Dr. Bernard F. Rafferty, Associate Superintendent
for External Operations

Dr. Win L. Tillery, Executive Director
for Special Education

Dr. Libby Goodman, Director
for Administrative Services

Dr. Russell Sgro, Special Education Administrator
for District Two

Mrs. Eileen Dwell, Instructional Supervisor
for District Two

Dr. Herman Axelrod, Instructional Supervisor
for District Five

ABSTRACT

This project was designed to provide staff development to principals, vice principals and other school administrators on special education issues relating to the implementation of P.L. 94-142.

Sixty-three administrators participated in a week long summer workshop. Sessions were held daily from 9 o'clock to 1 o'clock at the District Six Administrative Building. Topics were presented by project staff and by invited speakers from within the Division of Special Education.

Among the various subjects presented at the workshop were discussions on P.L. 94-142, due process in Special Education, CSET procedures, models for staff development, and availability of resources inside and outside the School District.

Pretest-posttest evaluations were conducted of the participants' perceptions of their knowledge acquisition about 13 selected special education topics. Results showed mean post ratings increased on all 13 (100%) of the items.

The participants' acquisition of skill in the use of the observation checklist could not be measured because of insufficient data.

Based on ratings by the 63 workshop participants, the staff development activities were well organized and provided valuable information to the administrators.

A major project accomplishment was the refinement and field testing of the Special Education Program Checklist. Comments by the administrators who tested the checklist indicated considerable satisfaction with its content and format.

PHILADELPHIA TRAINING PROJECT FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION
SUPERVISORS AND PRINCIPALS

Project Area:	Staff Development
Activity Manager:	Dr. Libby Goodman
Project Coordinator:	Russell Sgro, Eileen Dwell, Herman Axelrod
Headquarters:	Stevens Administrative Center, 13th & Spring Garden Streets
PBRS Code:	25-05-854
Federal Code:	G007801512
Operating Year:	1979-80
No. Served:	63 Administrators
No. of Employees:	Professional (part time) 3
Budget:	$15,000
Service Provided:	Staff development sessions on topics related to Special Education were provided for school administrators.
Evaluator:	Ted Silber

PROJECT HISTORY

This project was funded for three years, 1978 to 1981. Principals, vice principals and other school administrators were invited to participate in week long workshops designed to update administrators' knowledge of special education procedures, programs and resources. A successful summer workshop, attended by 80 school administrators, was held in August 1978 at University City High School. Participants indicated in a survey that the sessions were practical and interesting. Project staff developed a revised draft edition of a classroom observation checklist for special education program evaluation.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

In August 1979, the project conducted a one week staff development program in special education for administrators. All principals, vice principals and special education supervisors were invited to attend. Sessions were held daily from 9 o'clock to 1 o'clock. Topics were presented by the project staff and by invited speakers from within the School District's Division of Special Education. The agenda included the following: Overview of P.L. 94-142, Update on Special Education, CSET Made Simple, In-Service Mandates, In-Service Models for Comprehensive Staff Development, Due Process in Special Education, Clinical Observation Model, Resources in the School District for Special Education, and Resources

Outside the School District for Special Education. In addition, a number of films and sensitivity awareness sessions were presented during the week. Much of the third and fourth days of the workshop was devoted to training the participants in the use of the Special Education Program Checklist, an instrument developed to assist principals in observing and assessing special education classrooms in their schools.

Project records indicated that 63 administrators participated in the week long workshop. The number of participants varied daily, with the average daily attendance being approximately 55.

The project staff (a coordinator and two special education supervisors) devoted the remainder of the project year to formalizing and field testing the Special Education Program Checklist, developing a procedures manual, and planning the staff development program to be offered during the summer of 1980.

EVALUATION

Prior to the summer workshop a self-rating inventory was developed by the evaluators and project staff. It was designed to cover the knowledge and skills needed to educate effectively special education students. The inventory was distributed to all participants at the first session and again at the last session of the week long workshop. Using a four point scale, administrators were asked to rate their current level of knowledge on 13 selected items pertaining to special education. A total of 43 administrators completed both the pre- and post rating portions of the self-rating inventory. To measure the effect of training on the participants' perceptions, a comparison of mean pre-ratings with mean post ratings was performed.

The evaluators also summarized responses on the Special Education Program Checklists completed by the participants after viewing a film depicting a special education classroom. These responses were to be compared to trainers' responses to calculate the extent of agreement.

TABLE 1

INCREASES IN PRE- TO POST-MEANS ON THE SELF-RATING INVENTORY, AUGUST 1979

ITEM	PRE-MEAN	POST-MEAN	INCREASE IN MEAN
1. Components of Special Education classroom	2.09	3.47	+1.38
2. Evaluating Special Education classroom	1.88	3.37	+1.49
3. Selecting films for staff development	1.86	3.49	+1.63
4. Assessing staff development needs	2.21	3.33	+1.12
5. Obtaining resources for staff development	2.14	3.67	+1.53
6. Knowing information for CSET forms	2.42	3.58	+1.16
7. Facilitating the work of CSET	2.05	3.21	+1.16
8. Role in due process hearings	2.30	3.30	+1.00
9. Increasing faculty's sensitivity to Special Education pupils	1.95	3.44	+1.49
10. Availability of resources in School District	2.07	3.49	+1.42
11. Availability of resources outside School District	1.81	3.53	+1.72
12. Knowing characteristics of SED, EMR/ED, or LD	2.21	2.95	+.74
13. Knowing appropriate programs for SED, EMR/ED or LD	1.74	2.77	+1.03

A questionnaire designed to gather participants' reactions to staff development activities was distributed at the final session. The instrument used a five point scale to measure extent of satisfaction with and perceived usefulness of the workshop in general, and to individual topics in particular. Space was provided for the listing of the best and worst features of the workshop. Comments or suggestions for future programs were also solicited. Mean ratings on all the items were calculated and a list of the participants' comments and reactions were compiled.

One of the activities to be accomplished by the project during the second year was the field testing of the Special Education Program Checklist. Principals, vice-principals, and other administrators were asked to use the checklist, which they helped to develop during the workshop, for the purpose of monitoring special education classrooms in their schools. To measure the extent of use and assess the usefulness of the checklist, a ten item questionnaire was developed by the evaluator and project staff and sent to 63 participants. The instrument was designed to elicit responses both to logical and practical aspects of the checklist (i.e., are the items on the checklist relevant and is it a useable instrument). Participants were asked to assess the usefulness of the checklist even if they did not have the opportunity to use it in the classroom. Responses were summarized and sent to project staff for use in the final revision of the checklist.

FINDINGS

Objective 1: Participating principals/vice-principals will acquire knowledge and skills related to the monitoring of programs as determined by mean post ratings which are higher than mean pre-ratings on 75% of the items on a participants' self-rating inventory.

A summary of responses on the self-rating inventory is presented in Table 1. Using ratings that ranged from 1 (I know virtually nothing about this) to 4 (I have a better than average knowledge of this), administrators indicated their

level of knowledge on special education topics both before and after the staff development program. The participants' perception of their current level of knowledge improved in all areas as shown by increases in mean post ratings for the 13 items. Prior to the workshop, the survey indicated that administrators' perceived knowledge was lowest in the areas of programming for SED, EMR/ED or LD students (item 13) and in the availability of resources outside the School District (item 11). Means calculated after the workshop showed that the greatest gain in perceived knowledge was in availability of resources outside the School District (item 11). Conversely, programming for SED, EMR/ED or LD students was among the items that increased the least. Based on the survey, administrators felt that they had enough knowledge to perform adequately in 11 of 13 areas. The only exceptions involved identifying and programming for SED, EMR/ED or LD students. This objective was met.

Objective 2: By the end of the institute's observation training session, principals/vice principals will have acquired skill in the use of the observation checklist to the extent that for 85% of the checklist items, 85% of them are in agreement with trainers' ratings.

Because of insufficient data this objective could not be measured. After receiving training on the use of the classroom checklist, participants were asked to complete a checklist while viewing a film depicting a special education classroom. Participants' responses were to be compared to the correct responses as determined by the trainers. However, this could not be accomplished since many items on the checklist were not represented on the video tape used to test the participants. An evaluation of this objective was not feasible under the circumstantces.

Objective 3: By March 1980, at least 75% of the participating principals/vice principals will have used the observation checklist in the monitoring of their special education programs, as indicated by their responses to a survey.

Surveys were sent to 63 principals, vice principals and administrators who paricipated in the summer workshop. Thirty-four of the administrators, representing the following levels, returned the questionnaire:

Elementary	23
Middle	4
Junior High	3
Senior High	3
Special Center	1

A total of 41 classrooms involving the following exceptionalities were visited by administrators:

SED	11
LD	9
EMR	9
SPI	3
HH	1
RR	1
Hospital	1

Twenty-two of the respondents reported using the checklist with special education classrooms in their schools. The 22 users represented 35% of the total number of participants and 65% of those who returned the questionnaire. This objective was not met.

ADDITIONAL FINDINGS

Question 1: How useful was the checklist in helping administrators identify strengths and weaknesses regarding the special education classrooms in their schools?

While the majority stated that the checklist was helpful in all areas, more administrators found it suitable for identifying aspects of IEP's and record keeping (88%) than for planning classroom interactions or utilizing aides and ancillary services (74%). (See Appendix A).

Question 2: Is the checklist a workable and usable instrument?

Responses to items addressing the clarity, consistency, completeness, relevancy and ease of using the checklist were all answered positively by at least 85% of the respondents.

Approximately 75% of the administrators felt that use of the checklist would not cause disruption to the classroom routine or intimidate the teacher. A summary of the responses to the Principals' Questionnaire is presented in Appendix A.

Question 3: What were the participants' reactions and comments regarding the summer staff development sessions?

Workshop participants were given a questionnaire following the completion of the week long sessions. Results are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2

PARTICIPANTS' RATINGS OF THE PHILADELPHIA TRAINING PROJECT FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION SUPERVISORS AND PRINCIPALS, AUGUST 1979

Category	Mean Ratings
Content	4.6
Interest	4.2
Organization	4.5
Practicality	4.2
Pace*	66% rated it "ideal"
	17% rated it "somewhat slow"
	17% rated it "somewhat fast"
Interaction*	62% rated it "ideal"
	19% rated it "too little"
	19% rated it "too much"

*Pace and Interaction are rated on a scale from 1 (too slow, too little) to 3 (ideal) to 5 (too fast, too much). All other categories are rated on a scale from 1 (low) to 5 (high).

Using a five point scale ranging from 1 (low) to 5 (high), participants rated the entire week long proceedings on the dimensions of appropriateness of content, interest, organization and practicality. All mean ratings were above 4.2. Participants also rated the sessions on interaction and pace. For these dimensions the ideal rating on the five point scale was 3. The majority of participants rated both pace and interaction as "ideal."

In addition, reactions on the usefulness of individual topics were gathered. All mean ratings were above 3.7 on a five point scale. The responses are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

PARTICIPANTS' MEAN RATINGS ON TOPICS PRESENTED AT THE PHILADELPHIA TRAINING PROJECT FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION SUPERVISORS AND PRINCIPALS, AUGUST 1979

Topics	Mean Ratings
Sensitivity Awareness	4.2
Films	3.8
Use of Special Education Program Checklist	4.2
CSET Made Simple	3.8
In-Service Models for Staff Development	3.7
Using Films for Staff Development	3.8
Clinical Observation Model	3.8
Due Process in Special Education	3.8
Resources in the School District for Special Education	4.3
Resources Outside the School District for Special Education	4.5

CONCLUSIONS

Objective 1 addressed the self-perception of acquired knowledge and skills by the participants during the workshop. A comparison of mean pre-ratings with mean post ratings indicated that perceived knowledge was increased on all 13 (100%) of the items. This exceeded the projected criterion of 85%. Thus, this objective was attained.

The second objective of the project concerned training administrators in the use of a classroom checklist. The data from participants could not be compared to the "correct responses" identified by the trainers because too many assumptions had to be made about the situations presented on the video tape. The fact that this problem arose led to the redesign of the assessment procedure. The third year of

training will utilize slides and a narration to depict a special education classroom which participants will rate on the checklist.

The project's third objective specified that at least 75% of the workshop participants will have used the observation checklist during the school year. Twenty-two of 63 participants reported using the checklist. The number of administrators who reported utilizing the checklist was less than the criterion stated in the objective. Thus, this objective was not attained.

Comments of the users were favorable and, in some cases, enthusiastic about the development of the observation checklist.

Additional findings showed that the admistrator. perceived the checklist as well conceived and valuable as an instrument to guide their assessment of special education classrooms.

Aside from the complaints of poor ventilation, the comments of the summer workshop participants were positive. Responses on the Participant Questionnaire indicated that the information provided was found to be of value by the participants.

A major accomplishment for the project's second year was the refinement and field testing of the Special Education Program Checklist, and the drafting of a manual to guide administrators in using the checklist in special education classrooms. Its value as an observational instrument in determining compliance with P.L. 94-142 was attested to by those administrators who used it.

Plans for the third year of the project include finalizing the checklist and manual and disseminating the products to principals and other administrators who are responsible for special education classes in their schools.

APPENDIX A

Analysis of Responses to the Principal's Questionnaire on Usability of Checklist

During a summer workshop, principals and administrators were trained in the use of a special education classroom checklist and asked to utilize the checklist in their schools. To assess the usefulness of the checklist, questionnaires were sent to the participants. Responses representing the following levels from 34 principals and administrators were received.

Elementary	23
Middle	4
Junior High	3
Senior High	3
Special Center	1

The participants were asked to respond to the following questions:

1. Did you use the checklist with any of the special education classes in your school?

   YES ... 22

   NO ... 12

Sixty-five percent of the 34 respondents reported use of the checklists in their schools. A total of 41 classrooms were visited involving the following exceptionalities.

SED	11
LD	9
EMR.....	9
SPI.....	3
HH.....	1
RR.....	1
Hospital.....	1

2. Could the checklist be used without unduly disrupting classroom routine?

   YES ... 25

   NO ... 9

   Seventy-four percent felt the use of the checklist did not cause disruption in the classroom.

   Of those participants experiencing disruptions, the inaccessibility of records (IEPs, student files) and the need for class coverage while questioning the teacher were reasons most frequently cited.

3. Do you think the checklist intimidated teachers who felt that their performances were being rated?

   YES ... 7

   NO ... 26

   N/A ... 1

Seventy-six percent felt that their teachers were not intimidated by the use of the checklist.

Comments indicated that discussion and review of the checklist prior to visiting the classroom helped alleviate any concerns teachers may have about rating their performances.

4. Could the checklist be reasonably completed during one visitation period?

YES ... 20
NO ... 14

Fifty-nine percent completed the checklist during one classroom visit. Twelve percent needed as many as three visits to complete the checklist.

5. Do you think the use of a checklist will cause problems with P.F.T. or the Special Education supervisors?

YES ... 9
NO ... 22
N/A ... 3

Sixty-five percent felt that there would be no objection to the use of the checklist in the classroom.

Of those who felt P.F.T. might object, the close supervision of teachers and the attempt for accountability were mentioned as reasons for potential grievances.

6. Do you feel the rating scale (5-4-3-2-1) format is appropriate and easy to use?

YES ... 32
NO ... 2

Ninety-four percent considered the format suitable and simple to use.

7. Are the descriptions under the rating scales clear and consistent?

YES ... 32
NO ... 2

Ninety-four percent found the explanations to the rating scales to be understandable and consistent.

8. Was the checklist able to help you in identifying strengths and weaknesses in the following areas:

	YES	NO	N/A
IEP	30	2	2
Record Keeping	30	2	2
Materials and Equipment	28	4	2
Planning for Classroom Interaction	25	5	4
Working with Other Personnel	25	3	6

8. (continued)

While the majority of respondents felt that the checklist was helpful in all areas, more found it suitable for identifying aspects of IEP's and record-keeping (88%) than for planning classroom interactions or utilizing aides and ancillary services (74%).

9. Based on your knowledge of what constitutes compliance with P.L. 94-142, is there anything you would add to the checklist that would help you determine whether your classroom was in compliance?

YES ... 3
NO ... 29
N/A ... 2

Eighty-five percent stated the checklist contained complete information as an aide in determining compliance with federal law.

10. Are there any items on the checklist you felt were unnecessary?

YES ... 1
NO ... 31
N/A ... 2

Ninety-one percent felt the checklist contained items relevant to P.L. 94-142.